AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) Microlithography projection objective with a numerical aperture on the image side equal to or larger than 1.0, containing at least one lens of a crystal material from the group that ~~comprises~~ consisting of NaCl, KCl, KI, NaI, RbI, CsI, MgO, $MgAl_2O_4$ and ~~$Y_3Al_5O_3$~~ $Y_3Al_5O_{12}$.

2. (Currently amended) Microlithography projection objective according to claim 1, characterized in that the last curved lens on the image side ~~consists of~~ comprises one of the crystal materials named.

3. (Currently amended) Microlithography projection objective according to claim 1 or claim 2, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the numerical aperture on the image side is more than 1.40~~, preferably more than 1.65, and with special preference more than 2.0~~.

4. (Currently amended) Microlithography projection objective according to ~~at least one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 or claim2, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein at least one lens of one of the named crystal materials has a moisture protection coating.

5. (Currently amended) Microlithography projection objective according to ~~at least one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 or claim 2, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein a plurality of lenses ~~consist of~~ comprise one of the crystal materials ~~named, preferably of different ones~~, and that the index of refraction at an operating wavelength is highest for the lens that is arranged nearest to an image plane of the projection objective.

6. (Currently amended) Microlithography projection objective according to ~~at least one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 or claim 2, ~~characterized by being~~ wherein the objective is configured as an immersion objective.

7. (Currently amended) Microlithography projection objective according to ~~at least one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 or claim2, ~~characterized by being~~ wherein the objective is configured as an optical-near-field objective.

8. (Currently amended) Microlithography projection objective according to ~~at least one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 or claim2, ~~characterized by having~~ wherein the objective has an operating wavelength from the group ~~comprising~~ consisting of 248 nm, 193 nm and 157 nm.

9. (Currently amended) Microlithography projection objective according to ~~at least one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 or claim2, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein at least one of the lenses of one of the crystal materials named is composed of at least two lens components that are oriented with different crystallographic orientations.

10. (Currently amended) Microlithography projection objective according to ~~at least one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 or claim2, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein at least one lens is composed of a plurality of components and that at least one of said components consists of a crystal material ~~according to claim 1~~.

11. (Original) End plate of a microlithography projection objective, consisting of crystalline magnesium oxide which can be overlaid with a coating.

12. (Currently amended) Microlithography projection objective according to claim 11 ~~with~~ further including an end plate ~~according to claim 11, in particular with the features of at least one of the claims 1 to 10~~.

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Cancelled)

15. (New) Microlithography projection objective according to claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the numerical aperture on the image side is more than 1.65.

16. (New) Microlithography projection objective according to claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the numerical aperture on the image side is more than 2.0.

17. (New) Microlithography projection objective according to claim 1 or claim 2, wherein said plurality of lenses comprise different ones of the crystal materials named.

18. (New) Microlithography projection objective having a plurality of lenses comprising one of the crystal material from the group that consisting of NaCl, KCl, KI, NaI, RbI, CsI, MgO, $MgAl_2O_4$ and $Y_3Al_5O_{12}$, wherein the index of refraction at an operating wavelength is highest for the lens that is arranged nearest to an image plane of the projection objective.